

# Multidimensional Incongruence and Vote Switching in Europe

Ryan Bakker, University of Georgia  
Seth Jolly, Syracuse University  
Jonathan Polk, University of Gothenburg\*

## Abstract

Does ideological incongruence hurt parties in elections? Research on the representational relationship between parties and voters suggests that ideological congruence can boost a party's electoral prospects. However, while the mechanism is at the individual-level, most of the literature focuses on the party-level. In this article, we develop a set of hypotheses based on a multi-issue conception of party-voter congruence at the individual-level, and examine the electoral consequences of these varying congruence levels in the 2014 European Parliament elections. Consistent with our expectations, comparative analysis finds that ideological and issue-specific incongruence is a significant factor in voting behavior in the European Parliament elections. Although the substantive effects of incongruence are understandably small compared to partisanship, government, or EU performance evaluations, party-voter disagreement consistently matters, and voters' issue salience is an important moderator of the impact of incongruence on vote choice.

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*“But any science of politics must seek to find simple structures that organize this apparent complexity.”*

Poole and Rosenthal (1997, 3)

Spatial models of American politics generally find a one-dimensional ideological environment sufficient for analyzing political behavior and that an overarching liberal-conservative dimension structures most U.S. politics (Poole and Rosenthal 1985; Palfrey and Poole 1987; Poole, Rosenthal, and Koford 1991; Poole 2005). Without discounting the enduring relevance of the left-right dimension in the U.S. context, a substantial body of research points to the importance of a second, more culturally-based dimension of competition for European democracies (Kitschelt 1994; Marks et al. 2006; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009; Bornschier 2010; Kriesi 2010). Further, there is growing evidence that citizens and particularly party supporters are attentive to party positional shifts on European integration (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu 2014; Adams, Ezrow, and Wlezien 2016). Put simply, the politics of European societies is increasingly multidimensional.

Analyses of the representational relationship between parties and voters usually focus on overall congruence levels as measured by the ideological left-right scale (Blais and Bodet 2006; Powell 2009; Golder and Stramski 2010; Budge et al. 2012). As Powell (2000, 169) explains: “Representative congruence is the distance between the position of the policy-making party and the position of the median citizen on the left-right scale. The larger the distance, the less the congruence; the smaller the distance, the greater the congruence.” In this article, we build on research that focuses on the links between parties and their partisans (e.g., Belchior 2013; Giger and Lefkofridi 2014; Önnudóttir 2014) by hypothesizing that party-voter ideological incongruence, on multiple dimensions, is associated with an increase in vote switching. We test this by examining which individuals select a different party in the 2014 European Parliament (EP) election than they voted for in the previous national election, or abstained from the EP election altogether. The data for our analysis come from two sources, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Polk et al. 2017) and the

European Election Studies (EES)(Schmitt, Hobolt, and Popa 2015; Schmitt et al. 2015). We use the 2014 wave of the CHES data to measure the positions of political parties and the 2014 EES voter survey to measure the preferences of voters.<sup>1</sup>

Party-voter congruence on specific issues other than the left-right dimension has been referred to as “the blind corner” of political representation scholarship (Thomassen 2012, 13), and there are increasing calls for a multidimensional approach to assessing representation (Dalton 2015; Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016). This article advances this cause by examining issue-specific congruence between voters and parties. The 2014 waves of the CHES and EES surveys coordinated to ask several identical or similar items that measure voter preferences and party positions on various issues related to economic left-right, cultural politics, and European integration. This allows us to construct more fine-grained measures of party-voter congruence on more political issues than has previously been available. We then apply these measures in a micro-level, cross-national analysis of vote choice to examine if congruence levels between parties and voters on these different issues have electoral consequences, especially when the issues are highly salient to voters.

We expect that higher levels of incongruence will lead to more vote switching. Prominent research from Anglo-American contexts calls into question the importance of ideology and policy positions for vote choice, and instead highlights the role of group identities, projection effects, and the valence qualities of candidates (Sanders et al. 2011; Lenz 2013; Achen2 and Bartels 2016). We contribute to the discussion between these perspectives on voting behavior by modelling the decisions of individual voters to switch votes between the most recent national election and the 2014 European Parliament elections, and asking to what extent variation in party-voter congruence levels motivated the decision to switch.

European elections are well-suited to this task because they are often seen as second-order

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<sup>1</sup>We use expert survey data to place the parties because CHES and EES provide comparable placements for parties and the public across an array of issues. Reassuringly, Powell (2009) reports very similar measures of congruence using manifestos, experts, or public placements of parties, and recent comparisons of left-right placements by experts and mass survey respondents lend further support to the comparability of these sources (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu 2014; Dalton and McAllister 2015).

national elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Hix and Marsh 2007). The lower stakes of these elections allows citizens to vote (or abstain) based on sincere preferences or dissatisfaction with the domestic government without the pressure of affecting domestic government formation. In addition, EP elections facilitate competition over political topics that do not map neatly onto the general left-right dimension. For instance, there is growing evidence for the importance of European issues and information for EP vote choice (Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009; Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hong 2015; Hobolt and de Vries 2016), and others point to a strong role for cultural politics in understanding preferences and party positions towards European integration (Marks et al. 2006; Kriesi 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009).

In this context of multiple salient electoral issues, theories of issue ownership stress that different candidates or parties will emphasize different issues and imply that voters will support parties with a strong reputation on the issues that voters care about (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996). Crucially, however, these candidate-focused, aggregate level analyses need to be more rigorously combined with theories of voter issue salience and individual voting behavior (Bélanger and Meguid 2008). This research suggests that if party-voter congruence on cultural or European politics has an effect on vote choice, it will most likely matter for the voters that identify these issues as highly salient. To preview our findings, we present evidence that voters do indeed defect from parties in EP elections in the face of either multidimensional or issue-specific incongruence, and that this effect is most prominent when the issue is salient to the voter. Our results thus point to a potential complementarity between proximity and issue ownership models of voting behavior (Van der Brug 2004; De Sio and Weber 2014) at a time when issues that are often orthogonal to left-right politics, such as immigration, regularly top the list of European citizens' most important issues.

# 1 Multidimensional congruence and representation

Concern for an overlap between the preferences of citizens and the attitudes and issue positions of representatives is the foundation of interest in research on congruence. A central concept in canonical discussions between theorists of democratic representation (Schumpeter 1942; Schattschneider 1942; APSA 1950), congruence research remains a vibrant aspect of contemporary comparative politics (Blais and Bodet 2006; Powell 2009; Ezrow 2010; Golder and Stramski 2010), and achieving reasonable levels of party-voter agreement is understood as an essential feature of good and efficient representational democracy (Budge et al. 2012; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012). Investigating variation in party-voter congruence across the party systems of European polities, and explaining the consequences of this variation, is therefore central to understanding modern democracy.

Evidence from comparative research suggests relatively high levels of congruence between parties and voters, at least in Western Europe, on the left-right dimension of political competition (Mattila and Raunio 2006; Adams, Ezrow, and Leiter 2012; Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema 2012). Yet, the question of dealignment requires comparativists to address the question anew (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012, 172). The increased presence and salience of political issues that are not easily absorbed into conventional left-right competition potentially destabilizes traditional relationships between citizens and parties (de Vries and Marks 2012; Thomassen 2012), and raises pressing questions about congruence on important aspects of contemporary politics such as immigration and the European Union.

While there is some evidence that parties are relatively responsive to voter preferences on European integration (Dolný and Baboš 2015; Williams and Spoon 2015), others find much less responsiveness from mainstream parties on the EU (Thomassen and Schmitt 1997; Mattila and Raunio 2006, 2012; Dalton 2016; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*b*), especially after the Euro crisis (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*a*). These findings indicate a substantial gap between political elites and the electorate on the EU (Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema 2012), which has effects on satisfaction with democracy (Stecker and Tausenpfund

2016).

In addition, recent scholarship provides support for the idea that party-voter incongruence on European integration (Hong 2015) and immigration attitudes (Hobolt and Tilley 2016) influenced the decision of mainstream party supporters to switch to niche and/or challenger parties in recent elections. Previous research on the electoral consequences of party-voter incongruence focuses on voters that chose mainstream parties in the prior national election and switched to niche (Hong) or challenger (Hobolt and Tilley) parties in the subsequent election.<sup>2</sup> Although this is a particularly relevant group of switchers, it is not the only type of switching that takes place. Importantly, Hong (2015) did not include voters that abstained in the EP election, a large group of vote switchers that we examine below that are of particular relevance given the evidence that incongruence decreases turnout (Lefkofridi, Giger, and Gallego 2014). In contrast, Hobolt and Tilley (2016) do evaluate abstentions and consider a range of policy preferences for European voters, but their study does not include party-voter congruence on these policies and is not focused on EP elections. Hong considers congruence on general left-right ideology and EU integration—as do Hobolt and Spoon (2012)—but not other salient topics like immigration (Hong 2015, 520–521), which has also been shown to matter for European citizens’ political behavior (Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016). We address these concerns by modelling party-voter congruence on three items (general left-right, immigration, and European integration) that represent a broad cross-section of policy areas and dimensions of relevance to contemporary European democracies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Hobolt and Tilley (2016) uses government experience as the distinguishing characteristic, while Hong (2015) relies on a niche party categorization largely based on the work of Meguid (2005, 2008). In this definition, niche parties, like Greens and Radical Rights, emphasize issues other than standard left-right.

<sup>3</sup>Significantly, Hong (2015, 520) also directly considers protest voting in addition to ideologically motivated (sincere) vote switching, by including distrust in the system as an independent variable. This protest voting hypothesis is theoretically related to the sanctioning model proposed by Hobolt and Tilley (2016), where they use pocketbook economic variables (e.g., whether respondent feels they are worse off after the crisis) to proxy for voter desire to sanction parties in power. Finally, in their analysis, Hobolt and Tilley (2016, 20) find that political (dis)interest best explains abstention, rather than ideological positions, which is in line with research from the U.S. context reporting that uninformed voters are less likely to vote (Palfrey and Poole 1987). Though our primary focus is on the effects of ideological incongruence, we will incorporate these alternatives.

## 2 Incongruence, salience, and vote switching

Starting from a spatial theory of voting (Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984; Poole 2005), we expect that party-voter congruence should affect the decision to vote for another party or abstain between national and EP elections. We anticipate that greater ideological distance between the voter and the party loosens the bond between the representative (the party) and the represented (the voter), and will be more likely to produce a vote for a different party or abstention in the EP elections. Again, this is a contestable proposition. In their recent book, Achen2 and Bartels (2016) group this understanding within the “folk theory” of voting behavior that they sharply attack for being insufficiently attentive to group attachments and social identities. Also drawing from the U.S. example, Lenz (2013) argues that citizens select a candidate or party early in the process without much consideration of policy positions and subsequently adjust their own positions to those of the candidate. These alternative voting models challenge the spatial understanding of vote choice, which contends that, other things being equal, the closer the ideological position of a party to that of a voter, the more likely that voter will be to select the party.

In practice, other considerations enter voter calculations, including—in national parliamentary elections—strategic considerations about the viability of a party or the policy output of an eventual governing coalition (Bargsted and Kedar 2009; Duch, May, and Armstrong 2010). For example, although the general left-right position of an extreme left party may be closer to a hypothetical voter than a social democratic party in the same system, the voter may still choose the social democrats because she is concerned about the ability of the extreme left party to clear the electoral threshold or to take part in a governing coalition. EP elections reduce such strategic concerns because they do not produce a government and this offers voters the chance to vote ‘sincerely’ based on their general ideological preferences. At the same time, EP elections also present the opportunity for a different type of strategic voting, namely selecting a different party to send a message concerning domestic politics (Piketty 2000). Finally, since the stakes are lower in EP elections, many voters abstain from

voting at all. We anticipate that this will be more likely for voters that see themselves as ideologically distant from the party that they voted for in the national elections. Thus, we expect EP vote switching – be it sincere, strategic, or an abstention – due to ideological incongruence.

*Hypothesis 1: The larger the party-voter incongruence, either measured by general left-right or multidimensional distance, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.*

In addition to general ideology, we expect that attitudes towards European integration should affect vote choice in EP elections (Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hobolt and de Vries 2016).<sup>4</sup> In general, party elites are more likely to support European integration than the public (van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2009), and mainstream European parties have been relatively unresponsive to public opinion on the EU since the onset of the Euro crisis (Dalton 2016; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*b*). Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2016*a*) argue that “[t]he growth of public Euroscepticism since the financial (and other) crisis in 2007, however, has raised a new representational challenge for Europe’s parties and it is one that mainstream parties, particularly in western Europe, are largely failing to address.” Thus, government supporters that are more Euroskeptic than their party are more likely to defect to challenger parties in EP elections (Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). However, mainstream party voters that were closer to their parties on European integration position were less likely to switch to niche parties in EP elections (Hong 2015). This motivates our second hypothesis, which attempts to generalize these expectations beyond supporters of particular parties.

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<sup>4</sup>Our first hypothesis relates to the most general, overarching dimension of political competition within Europe, whereas the next two pertain to more particular policy areas. In order to protect against concerns that we are assessing incomparable types of congruence against one another, in the appendix, we investigate a more specific policy area related to left-right competition, redistribution. Our central findings hold in these alternate model specifications.



*Hypothesis 2: The larger the party-voter incongruence on European integration position, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.*

Proximity voting in European democracies is increasingly complicated by issue competition and the salience of a second, more culturally-based dimension of politics (Kitschelt 1994; Marks et al. 2006; de Vries and Edwards 2009; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009; Bornschieer 2010; Kriesi 2010). In particular, the topic of immigration has become extremely important to European politics in the last several years. Immigration is a unifying political question for most Radical Right parties in Europe, a party family that made a strong showing in the 2014 EP elections (Treib 2014). Party-voter congruence on immigration policy thus forms a key component in the contemporary representational relationship and gives rise to our next expectation.

*Hypothesis 3: The larger the party-voter incongruence on immigration position, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.*

Finally, we expect that the importance of incongruence on issues beyond left-right will vary based on the salience of the issue to voters. Issue salience has been used to explain the choice of Members of European Parliament to defect from their EP party group in roll-call votes (Klüver and Spoon 2015), and a similar logic should apply to voters in EP elections. Although issue ownership theory has roots in the critique of Downsian proximity voting (Stokes 1963), we agree with those that see areas of complementarity between positional and valence conceptions of electoral competition (De Sio and Weber 2014). Issue ownership models have been most prominently applied to candidate or party behavior in aggregate-level analyses (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996), but in making the case for bringing issue salience into theories of voting, Bélanger and Meguid (2008) cogently argue that “while

party ownership of an issue is important to individual vote choice . . . its effect is conditioned by the perceived salience of the issue in question.”

Recent research presents additional compelling evidence that individual-level salience must be taken into account when analyzing congruence relationships between parties and their voters (Hong 2015). For example, Giger and Lefkofridi (2014) report that niche parties are more congruent with their voters than mainstream parties on issues that are highly salient to niche party voters, and (Lefkofridi, Wagner, and Willmann 2014) shows that voter issue salience determines party choice when a voter is faced with a trade-off between socioeconomic and sociocultural congruence. In sum, we argue that when voters prioritize issues like the EU and immigration, party-voter incongruence on these dimensions will play a more powerful role in vote switching.

*Hypothesis 4: The effect of issue-specific incongruence will be stronger for voters that prioritize that issue (e.g., EU) over other issues.*

### **3 Incongruence across Multiple Issues**

Previous studies, such as Hobolt and Spoon (2012, 20) and Hong (2015), explore the effects of ideological incongruence on European Parliament vote switching. But both studies were limited by the lack of individual-level issue positions on multiple issues. In 2014, the European Election Studies team coordinated with the Chapel Hill Expert Survey team to ask the same questions across multiple issue areas. In addition to left-right and EU, researchers now have access to individual-level and party-level positions on immigration, redistribution, a trade-off between taxing and spending, role of government in economic interventions, civil liberties vs. law and order, and the environment. In this paper, we focus on three of these—general left-right, European integration, and immigration—because of their prominence in

the literature on party competition in Europe as well as in European Parliament elections.<sup>5</sup>

To measure individual-level incongruence, we simply capture the absolute value of the distance between a voter’s position (EES) and the position of the party (CHES) that voter selected in the last national election.<sup>6</sup> Smaller scores demonstrate that individuals are more proximate to their chosen party. As an example, see Figure 1 where we display the average of the party family voter’s position on the EU to the average party’s position. As the figure shows, the parties in the Radical Left and Radical Right families are more Euroskeptical than their voters (lower on the scale), but the mainstream parties are more incongruent on the EU because they favor the EU far more than their voters. This suggests the possibility that the parties of the Radical Right (and Left) engage in archetypical niche party strategy by attempting to capitalize on a distinctive and extreme position on European integration relative to other parties.

To further demonstrate variation in incongruence, we aggregated the individual-level incongruence by country (Figure 2) and by family (Figure 3). First, in Figure 2, we see tremendous variation across issues and across countries. Among issues, the EU issue has the most incongruence in nearly all countries (except Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary), and in most countries, it is not close. This is consistent with our knowledge that most parties have more favorable attitudes about European integration than the public (van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2009). In contrast, but not surprisingly, parties tend to be more congruent on general left-right. In all countries, incongruence is lower for left-right than the other issues.

Among countries, parties and voters are furthest apart on general left-right in Lithuania

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<sup>5</sup>The question wordings for these items are included in Appendix A.

<sup>6</sup>Hong (2015, 523) measures incongruence using voters’ perceptions of each party’s positions rather than something like CHES or CMP ideological measures. This is a reasonable strategy; however, it is limited in a crucial way for our purposes. Understandably, the EES only asks voters to place parties on a very few issues, in 2014 we only have public placements of the parties on general left-right, which means we cannot use voter placements to assess the effects of incongruence on immigration or other particular issues.

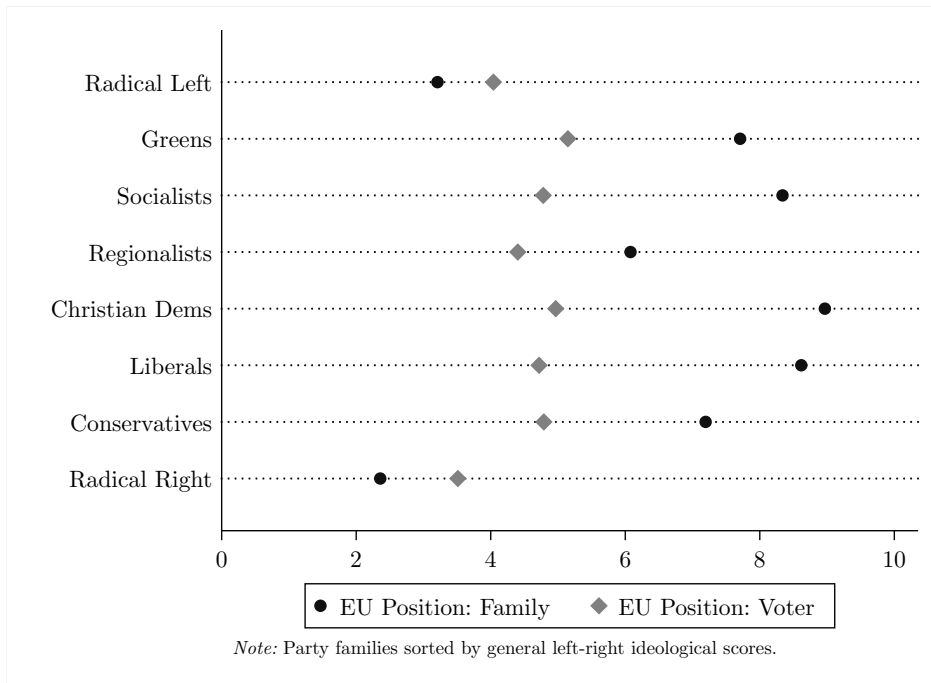


Figure 1: Party-Voter Incongruence on European Integration, by Party Family

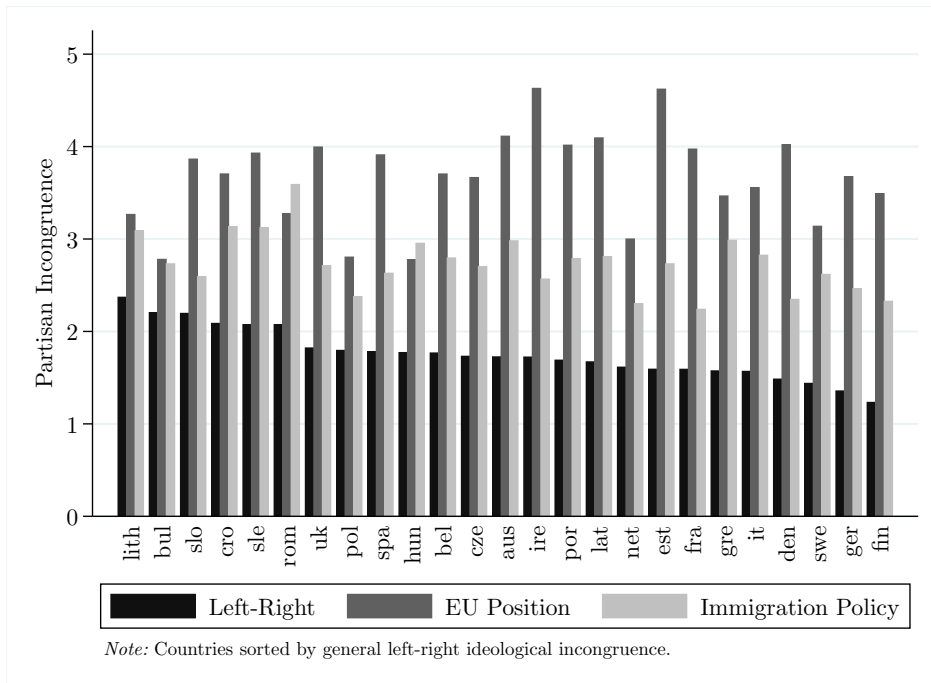


Figure 2: Party-Voter Incongruence on Multiple Issues, by Country

and Bulgaria and closest in Finland, Germany, and Sweden. In most countries, like Slovakia and Austria, the parties are furthest from their voters on the EU issue, whereas immigration is the most incongruent issue in Romania. As suggested by Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2016*b*, *a*), EU incongruence is a bigger problem in western Europe (e.g., UK, Ireland, France, Denmark) than it is for most eastern European countries; however, several eastern European countries, like Slovenia, Croatia, and Slovakia, also have high EU incongruence scores.

Next, in Figure 3, we see significant variation across party families on all issues. All major party families are more congruent on general left-right than they are on the other, more specific issues. The mainstream center-left and center-right, party families are most incongruent on the EU issue, while extreme parties on the left and right are most incongruent on immigration. As Figure 1 shows, the Radical Left and Radical Right parties are incongruent because they are more Euroskeptical than their voters, while the mainstream parties are far more supportive of the EU than their voters.

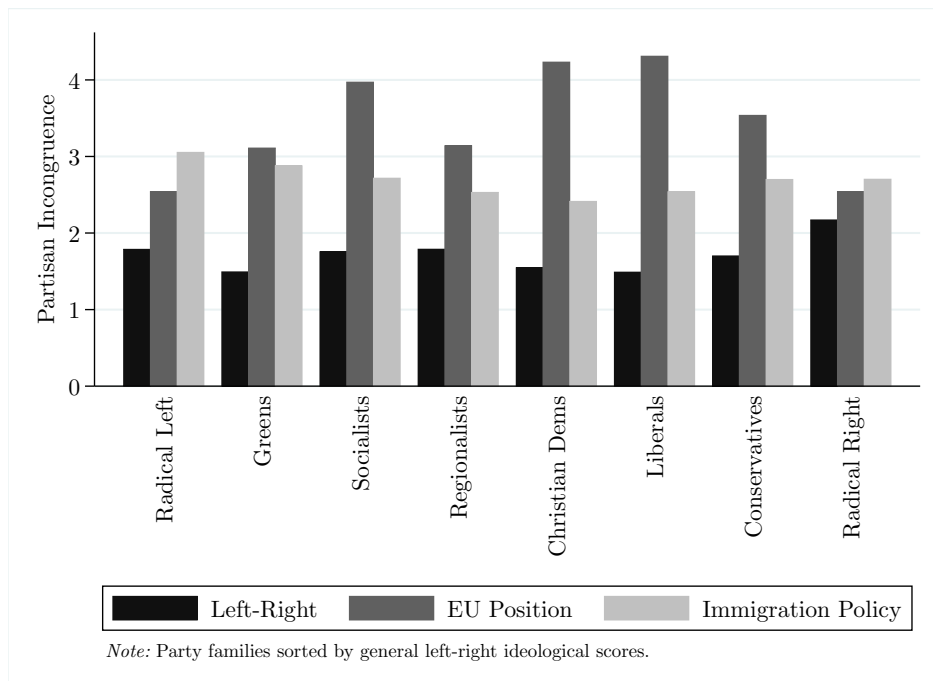


Figure 3: Party-Voter Incongruence on Multiple Issues, by Family

Certainly, this variation in incongruence across parties, families, and countries is interesting

in and of itself as a dependent variable. But in the next section, we shift our attention to incongruence as an independent variable. Does ideological incongruence hurt parties at the ballot box?

## 4 Research Design and Analysis

As discussed above, the data for our analysis come from two sources, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the European Election Studies (EES). We use the 2014 wave of the CHES data to measure the positions of political parties and the 2014 EES voter survey to measure the preferences of voters. These surveys contain a number of items that were specifically designed to facilitate comparison between voters and parties. We construct an absolute measure of congruence that does not consider the direction of incongruence, only the magnitude. Voters are defined as an individual that reported voting for a particular party in the previous national election. EES respondents that did not vote in the national election do not enter the analysis.

Our dependent variable is a series of categorical variables, starting with *consistent* vs. *switch*, where *consistent* means a vote for the same party at the EP election as in the most recent national election and *switch* means either defecting to a different party or abstaining. The next dependent variable categories are more specific: *consistent* vs. *defect*, *consistent* vs. *abstain*, and *abstain* vs. *defect*. These separate variables allow us to unpack different aspects of the decision matrix of individuals.

For reference, nearly half of the respondents were consistent voters (8,499), choosing the same party at the EP election as in the most recent national election. Nearly 23% defected to a different party (3,942), while another 27% abstained (4,631). In simple bivariate analysis, all of the measures of incongruence have significant positive relationships with switching.

Our theoretical interest is in the effect of incongruence on voter behavior, and we rely on the literature for our main control variables. Beyond demographic controls (age, gender)

and partisanship, we follow the Hobolt and Spoon (2012) and Hong (2015) strategy and use two variables to account for protest voting: EU satisfaction and government approval. In addition to these variables, Hobolt and Tilley (2016) find that political interest is the key explanatory variable for abstention. Since we also model abstention alongside switching, we include political interest as well.

Both Hong (2015) and Hobolt and Spoon (2012) use hierarchical models to control for the multilevel nature of the data. Similarly, we utilize random effects logistic regression with country as the group variable to account for the higher-order effects.

Before looking into the effects of each independent congruence measure, we first conduct an analysis using a 3-dimensional Euclidean distance measure for incongruence. This variable measures the cumulative, multidimensional distance between a voter and the party she supported in the national election.<sup>7</sup> Consistent with our expectations, the greater the 3-dimensional distance between a voter and the party she selected in the most recent national election, the more likely it is that she will switch from her national party choice in the subsequent European election. This effect is statistically significant while controlling for levels of partisanship, government approval, and EU approval. The model results are presented in Table 1.

Although the Euclidean distance in 3 dimensions captures the total level of incongruence across the multidimensional space and is a reliable predictor of vote switching, the aggregation masks interesting variation in party-voter linkages. To illustrate this point, in Figure 4 we plot the positions of 4 parties from the UK as well as the average positions of their supporters, in a three dimensional space. The parties with the smallest Euclidean distances are the Conservatives and UKIP, with average distances of 4.04 and 3.88, respectively.

However, while parties may appear observationally equivalent in terms of their average

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<sup>7</sup>The multidimensional Euclidian distance incongruence measure is the square root of the sum of the squares of the three individual incongruence measures:  $3d\ Incongruence = \sqrt{LR\ Incong^2 + Imm\ Incong^2 + EU\ Incong^2}$ .

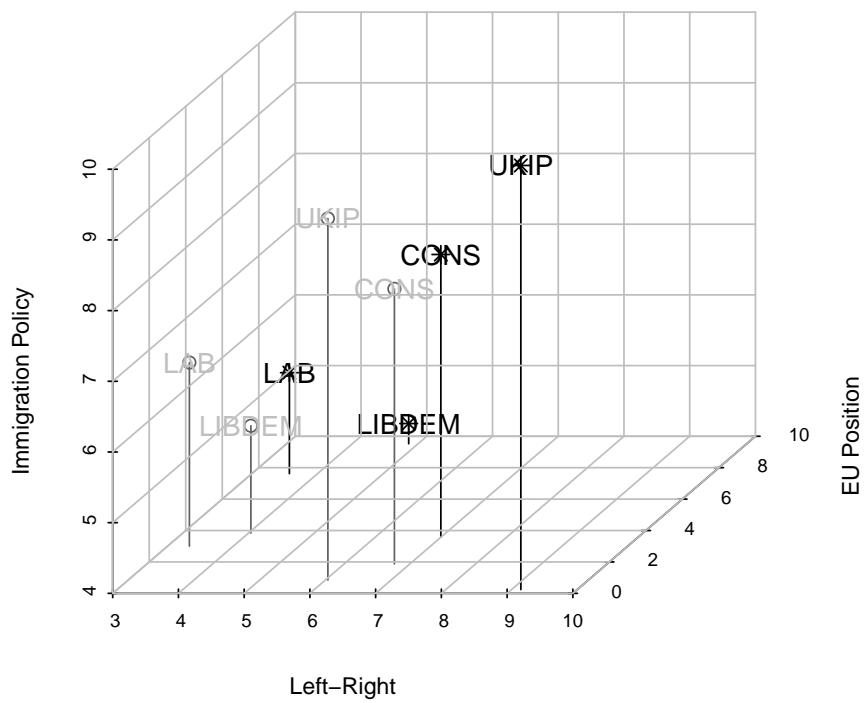


Figure 4: UK Party-Voter Incongruence in 3 Dimensions, by Party  
*Note:* Party positions are marked with black asterisks, partisan positions with grey circles.



Table 1: Effect of 3-dimensional Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections

	Model 1	
	Consistent (0)	
	vs.	
	Switch (1)	
<i>Main</i>		
3d Incongruence	0.07***	(0.01)
Govt Disapproval	0.23***	(0.05)
EU Disapproval	0.28***	(0.05)
Partisanship	-0.17***	(0.02)
Political Disinterest	0.23***	(0.02)
Male	0.04	(0.04)
Age	-0.01***	(0.00)
Constant	-0.72	(0.17)
<i>lnsig2u</i>		
Constant	-1.11	(0.30)
rho	0.09	
sigma_u	0.57	
AIC	13374.51	
BIC	13439.86	
N	10,511	

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses. *Consistent* means a vote for the same party and *switch* means *defecting* or *abstaining*.

multidimensional distances from their supporters, the specific ways in which they differ from their voters are meaningful. The Conservative Party, on average, is quite close to its supporters on the left-right and immigration dimensions, but is rather more pro-EU than its supporters (by nearly 2 points on an 11 point scale). UKIP, on the other hand, is nearly identical to its supporters in terms of positions toward the EU and immigration policy, but is placed considerably further right on the left-right dimension than are their supporters. In order to better understand the mechanism that drives individuals to switch from their national party vote choice, therefore, we now turn to a set of analyses that disaggregates the three-dimensional Euclidean distance into three separate unidimensional distances. In Table 2, we present four logit models explaining voter behavior at the 2014

European Parliament elections based on these separate incongruence measures.<sup>8</sup>

In Table 2 Model 1, we see control results consistent with earlier work (Hobolt and Spoon 2012). Older people are less likely to switch, as are self-identified partisans. Voters who are dissatisfied with the government and with the EU are more likely to switch. Most significantly for our theoretical interests, incongruence across multiple issues matters for vote switching. Higher levels of individual-level incongruence between a voter and her national election party is associated with higher probability of vote switching (either defecting or abstaining). With a few exceptions, these results are consistent with the separate *defect* and *abstain* models. Note, though, Models 1–3 show that different types of incongruence have different effects: left-right incongruence is more likely to be associated with switching parties, immigration incongruence is more likely to be associated with abstaining, while EU incongruence is associated with both switching and abstention. We will return to this difference, especially between EU and immigration, in the salience discussion below.

For those voters who do change (Table 2, Model 4), though, incongruence plays less of a role in the choice between abstaining and switching, with just left-right incongruence being significant. Instead, the driving factors are political interest and Euroskepticism. Those respondents who express less interest in politics are more likely to abstain than switch. Abstaining is also driven by disapproval of the EU, an interesting finding for those normatively bothered by the low turnout in European Parliament elections.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>In addition to the logit models shown, we also conducted multinomial logistic regression (with country fixed effects), available in Table 6 in the Appendix. The main effects are robust to alternative model specifications.

<sup>9</sup>For robustness, we considered other variables that could theoretically relate to switching and party choice, including electoral institutions, effective number of parties, and months between European and national elections. In the main model, none of the substantive effects changed significantly. For the time since last election and ENP variable, we used data from [parlgov.org](http://parlgov.org). For electoral institutions, we conducted sensitivity analysis by running the models with and without the UK and France (separately). These model results are available upon request.

Table 2: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections

	Model 1 Consistent (0) vs. Switch (1)	Model 2 Consistent (0) vs. Defect (1)	Model 3 Consistent (0) vs. Abstain (1)	Model 4 Abstain (0) vs. Defect (1)
<i>Main</i>				
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.24*** (0.05)	0.28*** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)	0.07 (0.08)
EU Disapproval	0.28*** (0.05)	0.15* (0.06)	0.41*** (0.06)	-0.27*** (0.08)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.49*** (0.03)	-0.39*** (0.04)
Male	0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.07 (0.06)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	-0.70*** (0.17)	-1.02*** (0.21)	-2.16*** (0.26)	0.85** (0.30)
<i>lnsig2u</i>				
Constant	-1.12*** (0.30)	-0.77* (0.31)	0.03 (0.31)	0.17 (0.31)
rho	0.09	0.12	0.24	0.26
sigma_u	0.57	0.68	1.01	1.09
AIC	13372.63	9030.09	8670.93	6106.96
BIC	13452.49	9106.75	8747.87	6178.87
N	10511	7859	8061	5102

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

The main DV is *consistent* vs. *switch*, where *consistent* means a vote for the same party at the EP election as in the most recent national election and *switch* means either *defecting* to a different party or *abstaining*.

In the next set of models in Table 3, we split the sample by party family (i.e., respondents who voted for the Radical Right party in the national election are included in the Radical Right model and so on). The coefficients are compared in the dotplot in Figure 5.<sup>10</sup>

Table 3: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections Consistent vs. Switch (Defect or Abstain) by Party Family

	(1) Radical Right	(2) Conservatives	(3) Liberals	(4) Christian Democrats	(5) Socialists	(6) Radical Left
<i>Main</i>						
Left-Right Incongruence	0.10* (0.05)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.13* (0.05)	0.08 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.31*** (0.07)
EU Incongruence	-0.09* (0.04)	0.06** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.05** (0.02)	0.07 (0.05)
Immigration Incongruence	0.13*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.09* (0.04)	0.02 (0.02)	0.07 (0.04)
Govt Disapproval	0.15 (0.24)	0.33* (0.13)	0.28 (0.15)	0.44* (0.17)	0.45*** (0.10)	-0.45 (0.26)
EU Disapproval	0.06 (0.25)	0.28* (0.11)	0.40** (0.14)	0.61*** (0.17)	0.28** (0.10)	0.15 (0.26)
Partisanship	0.03 (0.07)	-0.21*** (0.04)	-0.27*** (0.05)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.04 (0.09)
Political Disinterest	0.28*** (0.08)	0.38*** (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)	0.33*** (0.08)	0.22*** (0.04)	0.12 (0.09)
Male	-0.59*** (0.17)	-0.02 (0.10)	0.18 (0.12)	0.23 (0.14)	0.02 (0.08)	0.25 (0.18)
Age	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.01)
Constant	-0.84 (0.64)	-0.88* (0.39)	-0.30 (0.47)	-0.86 (0.74)	-0.48 (0.32)	-0.04 (0.69)
<i>lnsig2u</i>						
Constant	-1.22* (0.59)	-0.37 (0.43)	0.18 (0.50)	1.28* (0.60)	-0.17 (0.33)	-0.81 (0.58)
rho	0.08	0.17	0.27	0.52	0.20	0.12
sigma_u	0.54	0.83	1.10	1.90	0.92	0.67
AIC	907.90	2496.88	1732.28	1287.38	3804.91	809.27
BIC	958.08	2558.78	1790.04	1342.75	3871.56	858.65
N	707	2054	1409	1134	3163	658

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>10</sup>In the Appendix, we show the results for the Greens and Regionalists in Table 7.

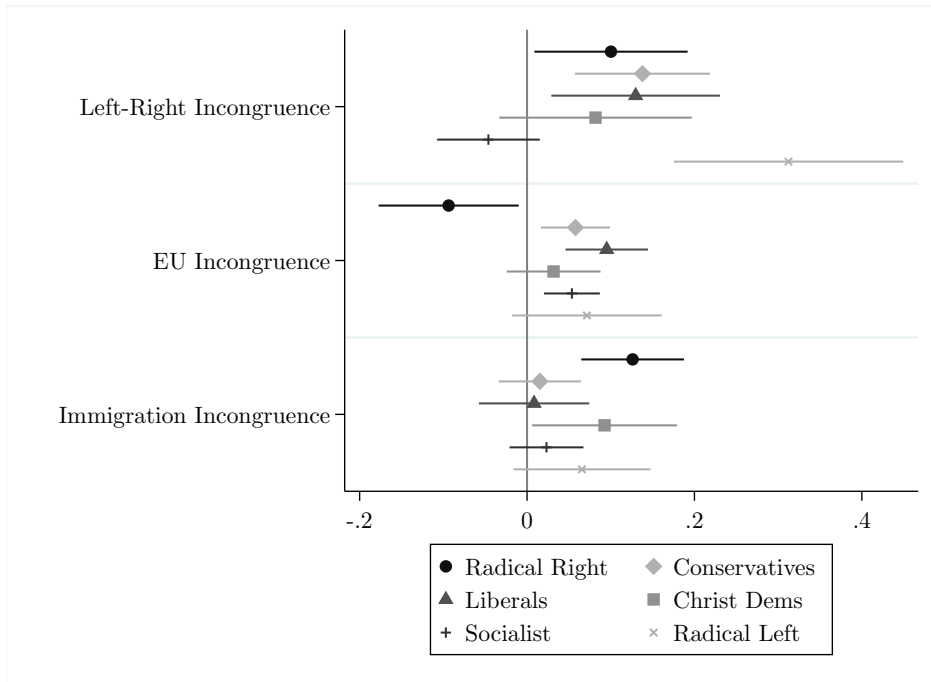


Figure 5: Analysis of Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections  
Coefficients from Table 3

In these models, two things stand out. First, the effects of incongruence are not consistent across families. Liberals and Conservatives suffer when they are incongruent on the EU and general left-right. Christian Democratic voters are more likely to switch when they express disinterest, and disapproval of the government and EU, although immigration incongruence has a modest effect. Finally, Socialist voters are more likely to switch when their EU incongruence is higher, but also have larger effects from protest variables.

Among the non-mainstream parties, Radical Left party voters switch when incongruence on general left-right is high, but, as expected, the likelihood of switching is not associated with any protest variables. Radical Right parties suffer when they are incongruent on general left-right and immigration, but actually do better when they are incongruent on the EU. Given that Radical Right parties are more extreme in their Euroskepticism than their voters—in the 2014 data only the Radical Right and Radical Left parties are more Euroskeptic than their voters—we suspect this finding may be a result of directional voting (Rabinowitz and

Macdonald 1989). Also, except for the Christian Democrats, immigration incongruence is only significant for Radical Right voters. This effect is shown in Figure 6.

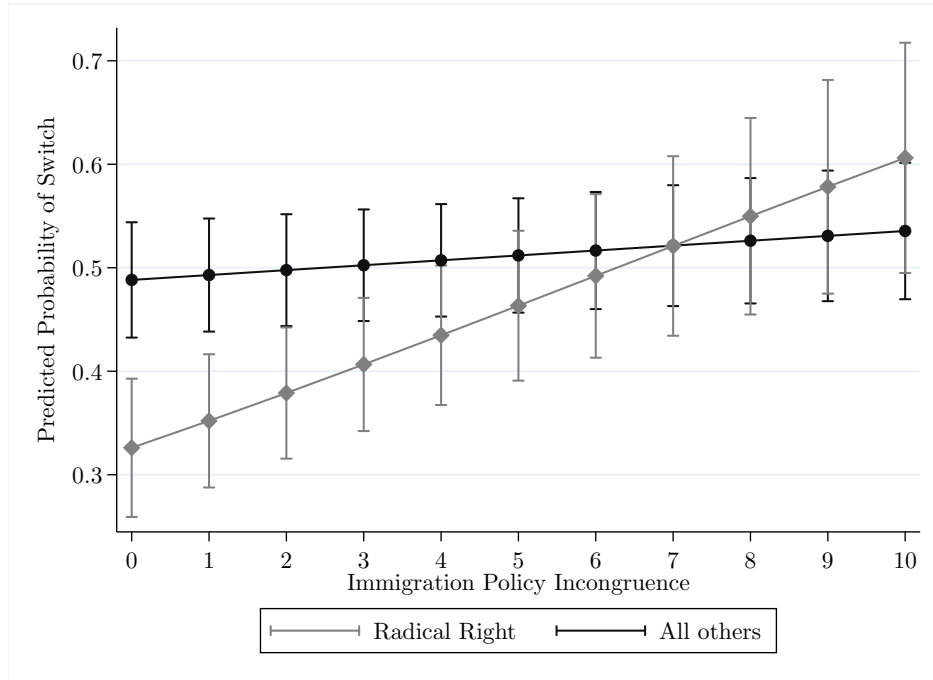


Figure 6: Effects of Immigration Incongruence on the Predicted Probability of Switching

Figure 6 illustrates that Radical Right voters are less likely to switch if they are congruent with their party on immigration, with only a 30% chance of switching. But at higher levels of incongruence, Radical Right voters behave like other voters, with a nearly 60% chance of switching at the highest levels of incongruence. The second main finding of Table 3 concerns protest voting. These models show that Government and EU disapproval only affects the mainstream parties, not the Radical Right and Radical Left parties.<sup>11</sup> With these findings established, we now move on to consider the role of issue salience, which extends our focus on the importance of EU incongruence.

<sup>11</sup>In the appendix, we further explore this pattern with a set of models splitting the party supporters into government and non-government parties in Table 8. Similar to the models in Table 3, these models confirm that incongruence and protest variables motivate switching from mainstream parties, whereas only incongruence variables, not protest variables, affect challenger party switching.

## 5 Issue Saliency and Incongruence

For each of the issue-specific hypotheses, we considered a corollary: issue voters will be more troubled by incongruence than other voters. In other words, party-voter incongruence on an issue will matter more if that voter considers it one of her most important issues. In the next set of models, we evaluate these hypotheses.

To do so, we utilize open-ended responses to the most important problem (MIP) questions in the 2014 EES, which were then grouped into 148 categories such as immigration, unemployment, etc.<sup>12</sup> We created simple dummies for voters who prioritize (i.e., name the issue as the most important or second most important issue) the EU and immigration.<sup>13</sup> In our matched party-voter dataset, 11.8% of respondents considered immigration the most important issue (2,008 out of 17,072) and 3.0% considered the EU the most important issue (515 out of 17,072).<sup>14</sup> For reference, unemployment was the most frequently cited top issue, with 37.6% of respondents mentioning it as the first or second most important issue.

In the next set of models in Table 4, we introduce interactions to test the saliency hypotheses. For reference, we include Model 1 from Table 2. Interestingly, there is very little movement in the other coefficients in the model whether we include or exclude the interactions. In fact, the incongruence measures themselves hardly change.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Many thanks to the EES team for sharing a version of the survey with the MIP question translated and coded. We are particularly grateful since categorizing the open-ended responses given in the respondents' native languages is an intense coding operation.

<sup>13</sup>For immigration, the categories are immigration, labour migration/emigration, and national immigration policy. For the EU, the categories are European integration, EU political corruption, financing the EU, competences of the EU institutions, European Central Bank, membership in the EU of Eastern European countries and the Balkans, structural funds, single market, effect of the Euro, or European elections.

<sup>14</sup>In the full EES dataset with 30,064 respondents, the percentages are similar, with 2.6% citing the EU and 9.8% immigration.

<sup>15</sup>For reference, in the appendix, Tables 9–10 displays the results for the interaction models with the four dependent variables, following the format of Table 2.

Table 4: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections  
 Consistent vs. Switch (Defect or Abstain) with Most Important Issue Interactions

	(1) Consistent (0) vs. Switch (1)	(2) EU	(3) Immigration
<i>Main</i>			
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04** (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Govt Disapproval	0.24*** (0.05)	0.24*** (0.05)	0.23*** (0.05)
EU Disapproval	0.28*** (0.05)	0.28*** (0.05)	0.28*** (0.05)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.17*** (0.02)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.23*** (0.02)	0.23*** (0.02)
Male	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
EU MIP		0.04 (0.19)	
EU MIP x Incongruence		0.09 (0.05)	
Immigration MIP			-0.06 (0.11)
Immigration MIP x Incongruence			-0.00 (0.03)
Constant	-0.70*** (0.17)	-0.70*** (0.17)	-0.70*** (0.17)
<i>lnsig2u</i>			
Constant	-1.12*** (0.30)	-1.13*** (0.30)	-1.13*** (0.30)
rho	0.09	0.09	0.09
sigma_u	0.57	0.57	0.57
AIC	13372.63	13365.08	13375.88
BIC	13452.49	13459.47	13470.26
N	10511	10511	10511

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.



Turning to the interactions, though, the interactive salience hypotheses find some support in the EU category, with the interaction term having a p-value of 0.06. Voters who prioritize the EU are statistically significantly more likely to switch away from the party that they selected in the national election if incongruence on the EU issue is higher. Figure 7 displays the predicted probabilities with one line representing EU Issue voters and another representing non-EU Issue voters others to highlight this pattern.

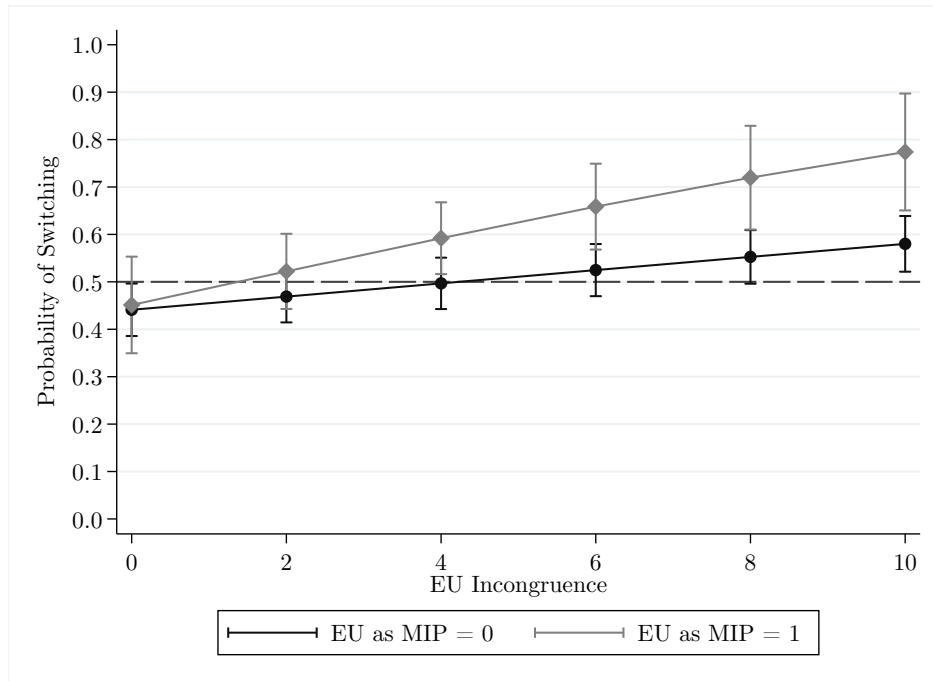


Figure 7: EU Incongruence and the Predicted Probability of Switching or Abstaining

Figure 7 shows more clearly than the table that incongruence has a stronger effect on EU Issue voters (i.e., voters who list EU as an MIP) than on voters who do not consider EU as important.<sup>16</sup> Non-EU Issue voters are only more than 50% likely to switch at the very highest levels of incongruence. EU Issue voters, however, are more likely to switch at only medium levels of incongruence ( $\approx 4$ ). Interestingly, EU MIP voters are no more Euroskeptical than those voters who do not consider the EU to be a most important issue (4.8 vs. 4.6, but

<sup>16</sup>The simple slope for the conditional effect of EU incongruence is 0.15,  $p < 0.01$ .

statistically insignificant); however, the parties they support are more Euroskeptical, with scores of 6.9 vs. 7.3.

Surprisingly, though, voters who consider immigration to be the most important issue do not appear to behave differently than other voters in terms of incongruence.<sup>17</sup> The salience interaction is not significant in the immigration model (see Table 10 in the appendix for more detail).

Our preliminary hypothesis for this null finding is that we would expect at least some incongruent immigration MIP voters to switch to a party closer to their position, but they are far right on immigration, and there simply are not any parties further right than these voters in their party system. Thus, they ‘satisfice’ with the closest party when they would switch if presented the opportunity. Two factors offer tentative support for this proposition. First, immigration priority voters are more right-wing and anti-immigrant than other voters and even their own parties. Basic t-tests show that immigration MIP voters are far more extreme on immigration than other voters (6.8 vs. 5.4). In comparison, the party positions of immigration MIP voter parties are not much different than the preferred parties of those voters who do not prioritize immigration (5.6 vs. 5.2). Similarly, both immigration MIP voters and parties are more right-wing on general left-right, as expected.<sup>18</sup> Second, immigration priority voters are also more likely to abstain than switch to a different party when they defect from their national choice (See footnote 17), indicating they are not satisfied with the available options.

In short, while immigration MIP voters do not behave differently if they are more incongruent with their party, those voters who consider the EU to be a most important issue are more likely to change their vote if incongruence on the EU issue is higher. Not only does

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<sup>17</sup>This is not to say these voters are not interesting on their own. Of the 2008 people in our sample that listed immigration as the MIP, only 43% of them switched (876/2008). Of these, 56% of them abstained in the EP election. So while the immigration MIP individuals are less likely to switch, when they do defect from their national choice, they are more likely to abstain than vote for a new party.

<sup>18</sup>Immigration voters are 5.5 compared to 5.1 for other voters. Their parties are 5.7 compared to 5.3. These differences are statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.001$  level.

this finding support the literature on EU issue voting at EP elections, but it also points to a representational gap that could continue to cost mainstream parties at European elections unless they either moderate their positions or persuade voters to see the benefits of integration.

## 6 Discussion

American politics can generally be well depicted as a low dimensional space, and in their path-breaking analysis of roll call voting in US Congress, Poole and Rosenthal (1997, 13) go so far as to state that “virtually no substantive concern is served by going beyond two dimensions.” In contrast, scholars report substantially more variation in the dimensionality of European political systems (Schofield 1993*a, b*; Stoll 2011; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk 2012). In this analysis, we examined this multidimensional environment by investigating the effects of ideological and issue-specific incongruence on voting behavior. Recent research indicates that voters infer parties’ EU positions from governing coalitions (Adams, Ezrow, and Wlezien 2016) and that citizens, especially party supporters, perceive party shifts on European integration positions (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu 2014). We build on these findings by providing evidence that voters switch from their national parties at the European Parliament elections in the face of ideological or issue-specific incongruence, and that this is particularly true when voters list issues directly related to the European Union as the most important problem facing society.

The effects of ideological and issue-specific incongruence were small in comparison to partisanship, which highlights the relevance of critiques of spatial voting models (Sanders et al. 2011; Lenz 2013; Achen2 and Bartels 2016). Still, even in the presence of strong controls such as partisanship, government and EU approval ratings, ideological incongruence remains associated with party defection and abstention, a finding in line with work based on the 2009 (Clark 2015; Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hong 2015) and 2014 European Parliament elections

(Hobolt and de Vries 2016), and broadly supportive of spatial voting models.

An additional contribution of this article is its finding on the importance of including issue salience in party-voter congruence analysis. There is little reason to believe that parties would suffer electoral consequences for incongruence on issues that voters do not care about (Petrocik 1996; Bélanger and Meguid 2008; De Sio and Weber 2014). Taking into account the most important issues for voters allowed us to combine insights from positional and issue salience research to build a micro-level, comparative analysis of the effects of multidimensional incongruence on voting behavior. Consistent with our expectations, voters cared most about incongruence between themselves and their national party on the EU when they identify the EU as the most important policy. This finding complements arguments that individual-level salience must be incorporated when analyzing congruence relationships between parties and their voters (Giger and Lefkofridi 2014), as well as research showing that issue salience determines vote choice when there is a trade-off between socio-economic and socio-cultural congruence (Lefkofridi, Wagner, and Willmann 2014; Klüver and Spoon 2015).

For parties, the trade-offs and complications of attempting to reconcile the economic, cultural, and EU preferences of voters have been on full display in recent elections, referendums, and government formation processes across Europe. The representational strain (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012) generated in trying to achieve reasonable amounts of party-voter agreement in a multidimensional environment has also been a distinguishing feature of electoral campaigns in the Netherlands, France, and Germany in 2017, and is only likely to become more prominent as immigration concerns continue to top public opinion polls as the most important issue and the politics of European integration become ever-more intertwined with domestic political competition.

Future research could extend the results of our findings that less effective representation can have important electoral consequences in two key ways. First, we utilized EP elections as a test case but the expectations also apply to national elections. In these elections, strategic voting plays a larger role, which must be taken into account. Our salience-incongruence ap-

proach may shed light on the conditions under which voters desert the most proximate party to support a second-best (ideological) option. Second, we have not deeply considered the direction of incongruence in this paper. But as the null finding on immigration salience suggests, when voters are more extreme than all other parties, they cannot easily defect to other parties to resolve the incongruence, which may lead to more abstention and dissatisfaction with the system.

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## Appendix A. Survey questions

### Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014

- **General left-right:** Please tick the box that best describes each party’s overall ideology on a scale ranging from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right).
- **Immigration:** Position on immigration policy. (11 point scale: 0 = Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration, 10 = Fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration).
- **European integration:** How would you describe the general position on European integration that the party leadership took over the course of 2014? (7 point scale: strongly opposed to strongly in favor).<sup>19</sup>

### European Election Study 2014

- **General left-right:** QPP12 - In political matters people talk of “the left” and “the right”. What is your position? Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “left” and 10 means “right”. Which number best describes your position?
- **Immigration:** QPP17.6 - Immigration. (11 point scale: 0 = You are fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration, 10 = You are fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration).<sup>20</sup>
- **European integration:** QPP18 - Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification ‘has already gone too far’ and 10 means it ‘should be pushed further’. What number on this scale best describes your position?

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<sup>19</sup>We rescaled this question (0 – 10) to facilitate comparison.

<sup>20</sup>We reversed the scale of this question to facilitate comparison.

## Appendix B. Table 1 with Redistribution Incongruence

Table 5: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections

	Model 1 Consistent (0) vs. Switch (1)	Model 2 Consistent (0) vs. Defect (1)	Model 3 Consistent (0) vs. Abstain (1)	Model 4 Abstain (0) vs. Defect (1)
<i>Main</i>				
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04* (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06* (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Redistribution Incongruence	0.04** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.24*** (0.05)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)	0.08 (0.08)
EU Disapproval	0.27*** (0.05)	0.14* (0.06)	0.40*** (0.07)	-0.27*** (0.08)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.05 (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)	-0.40*** (0.04)
Male	0.05 (0.04)	0.01 (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.06 (0.06)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	-0.76*** (0.18)	-1.04*** (0.21)	-2.27*** (0.27)	0.97** (0.30)
<i>lnsig2u</i>				
Constant	-1.13*** (0.30)	-0.78* (0.31)	0.02 (0.31)	0.16 (0.31)
rho	0.09	0.12	0.24	0.26
sigma_u	0.57	0.68	1.01	1.08
AIC	13152.60	8900.28	8508.77	6002.78
BIC	13239.52	8983.72	8592.50	6081.02
N	10338	7738	7922	5016

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.



## Appendix C. Multinomial Logit

Table 6: Multinomial Logit Model of Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections

	Consistent vs Defect	Consistent vs Abstain
Left-Right Incongruence	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Immigration Incongruence	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Govt Disapproval	0.27*** (0.06)	0.18** (0.06)
EU Disapproval	0.15* (0.06)	0.42*** (0.06)
Partisanship	-0.19*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)
Political Disinterest	0.02 (0.02)	0.51*** (0.03)
Male	0.00 (0.05)	0.10 (0.05)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
<i>Country Fixed Effects included</i>		
Constant	-1.67*** (0.02)	-2.59*** (0.20)
Pseudo $R^2$		0.12
N		10511

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Multinomial logistic regression (with country fixed effects) with standard errors in parentheses.

## Appendix D. Greens and Regionalists

Table 7: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections  
Consistent vs. Switch (Defect or Abstain) by Party Family

	(1) Greens	(2) Regionalists
<i>Main</i>		
Left-Right Incongruence	0.11 (0.08)	0.08 (0.11)
EU Incongruence	0.14** (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)
Immigration Incongruence	0.01 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.08)
Govt Disapproval	0.37 (0.25)	0.28 (0.42)
EU Disapproval	-0.08 (0.25)	-0.27 (0.38)
Partisanship	-0.27** (0.09)	-0.13 (0.15)
Political Disinterest	0.10 (0.10)	0.02 (0.17)
Male	0.34 (0.20)	-0.19 (0.33)
Age	-0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	-0.13 (0.57)	0.13 (1.24)
<i>lnsig2u</i>		
Constant	-1.04 (0.60)	1.16 (0.63)
rho	0.10	0.49
sigma_u	0.59	1.79
AIC	662.94	300.40
BIC	709.48	340.62
N	508	286

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

## Appendix E. Government and Opposition Parties

Table 8: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections  
Consistent vs. Switch (Defect or Abstain) by Government Status

	(1) Government Party	(2) Non-government Party
<i>Main</i>		
Left-Right Incongruence	0.05 (0.03)	0.07** (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.05** (0.02)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.69*** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.09)
EU Disapproval	0.30*** (0.08)	0.12 (0.09)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.29*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.04)
Male	0.11 (0.07)	0.01 (0.07)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Constant	-1.50*** (0.25)	0.21 (0.28)
<i>Insig2u</i>		
Constant	-0.74* (0.33)	-0.46 (0.33)
rho	0.13	0.16
sigma_u	0.69	0.79
AIC	5735.04	5039.67
BIC	5806.06	5108.81
N	4707	3965

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

For supporters of government parties, incongruence on the EU is associated with switching (Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009), but other forms of incongruence matter less. Instead, punishment and protest voting is the main story: government and EU disapproval are strong factors in explaining vote switching. In contrast, non-government party supporters are not

more likely to switch if they disapprove of the government or EU. Rather, their voting behavior depends on incongruence on general left-right, EU, and immigration.

## Appendix F. MIP Models

Table 9: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections with EU Most Important Issue Interactions

	Model 1 Consistent (0) vs. Switch (1)	Model 2 Consistent (0) vs. Defect (1)	Model 3 Consistent (0) vs. Abstain (1)	Model 4 Abstain (0) vs. Defect (1)
<i>Main</i>				
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)
EU MIP	0.04 (0.19)	-0.06 (0.25)	0.12 (0.23)	-0.33 (0.30)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
EU MIP x Incongruence	0.09 (0.05)	0.10 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)	0.04 (0.07)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.24*** (0.05)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.20** (0.06)	0.07 (0.08)
EU Disapproval	0.28*** (0.05)	0.14* (0.06)	0.41*** (0.06)	-0.27*** (0.08)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.49*** (0.03)	-0.39*** (0.04)
Male	0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.11* (0.05)	-0.06 (0.06)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	-0.70*** (0.17)	-1.02*** (0.21)	-2.17*** (0.26)	0.86** (0.30)
<i>Insig2u</i>				
Constant	-1.13*** (0.30)	-0.77* (0.31)	0.02 (0.31)	0.17 (0.31)
rho	0.09	0.12	0.24	0.26
sigma_u	0.57	0.68	1.01	1.09
AIC	13365.08	9028.96	8666.89	6109.55
BIC	13459.47	9119.56	8757.82	6194.54
N	10511	7859	8061	5102

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

Table 10: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections with Immigration Most Important Issue Interactions

	Model 1 Consistent (0) vs. Switch (1)	Model 2 Consistent (0) vs. Defect (1)	Model 3 Consistent (0) vs. Abstain (1)	Model 4 Abstain (0) vs. Defect (1)
<i>Main</i>				
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Immigration MIP	-0.06 (0.11)	0.04 (0.13)	-0.17 (0.15)	0.35* (0.18)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Immigration MIP x Incongruence	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.05)
Govt Disapproval	0.23*** (0.05)	0.28*** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)	0.07 (0.08)
EU Disapproval	0.28*** (0.05)	0.15* (0.06)	0.42*** (0.06)	-0.27*** (0.08)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.49*** (0.03)	-0.39*** (0.04)
Male	0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.06 (0.06)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	-0.70*** (0.17)	-1.02*** (0.21)	-2.15*** (0.26)	0.83** (0.30)
<i>lnsig2u</i>				
Constant	-1.13*** (0.30)	-0.78* (0.31)	0.02 (0.31)	0.15 (0.31)
rho	0.09	0.12	0.24	0.26
sigma_u	0.57	0.68	1.01	1.08
AIC	13375.88	9033.92	8672.34	6105.25
BIC	13470.26	9124.52	8763.27	6190.23
N	10511	7859	8061	5102

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.